

Salt of the Earth

Rustic American Eatery & Bakery

Skate Wing with Lemon & Caper

The following dish is an homage to grenobloise, a classic dish featuring many of the components listed below. We celebrate intensity of flavor in the restaurant, as I often carry the personal philosophy of “if some is good, then more is better.” The finished sauce is very intense, mouth puckering at first, and immediately replaced with a rich and bold mouth feel.

4 – 6 oz Skate Filets

3 cups all-purpose flour

For the Pan Sauce:

The secret to this pan sauce is to add enough liquid (our wine and lemon juice here) and reduce them heavily before mounting with plenty of butter. It will quickly become one of your favorites.

2 T	whole butter, cold, and diced
3 T	minced shallot
1 T	minced garlic
¼ C	capers, drained from brine, or salt packed capers thoroughly rinsed with multiple washes of clean water
1 t	red chili flake
3 slices	caramelized lemon
½ C	freshly squeezed lemon juice
½ C	crisp dry white wine
4 T	whole butter, cold – diced
2 T	finely minced parsley

In a medium saucepan over medium low heat, melt 2 tbsp of the butter. Add the shallot and garlic and cook, stirring frequently, until shallots and garlic have started to soften, about 1-2 minutes. Add capers & lemon slices, and deglaze with wine and lemon juice. Increase the heat slightly, and cook until liquids have reduced au sec, or almost dry. Remove pan from heat and slowly add the butter in 1 tbsp increments, whisking between each addition to ensure all butter is incorporated before adding the next. Once all butter is incorporated, add the parsley, and season to taste. The finished sauce should be thick and intense, and very responsive to heat – it is a weak emulsion and sensitive to breaking.

For the Caramelized Lemon:

2 Lemons, end trimmed and sliced to ¼” thickness

High heat neutrally flavored cooking oil

Heat a medium sautee pan over moderate heat. Allow pan to sit on flame for 1-2 minutes to slowly achieve desired level of temperature. Add the oil, simply enough to coat the bottom surface of the pan. Add the lemon slices, and allow for the lemons to caramelize in pan. Turn the slices, and finalize the caramelization on the other side.
Remove and allow to cool.

For the Skate:

Sprinkle skate filets with 50/50 mixture (see page 000). Allow to sit 1 hour. In a shallow baking dish, place the flour, and dip each skate wing in, ensuring fish is completely covered in flour. Place skate wings onto a plate, shaking off excess flour.

Heat a large saute pan over medium heat. Add vegetable or other high heat oil, and carefully place a skate wing in the pan, allowing it to drop away from you. Cook until golden brown, flip with a fish spatula, and cook on opposite side until golden brown, and fish is cooked through. Repeat with remaining filets.

Plating:

Spoon half of the sauce onto chosen plates as a base. Place skate on top of sauce, spoon additional sauce onto the skate, and garnish with caramelized lemon slices.

Matthew Pietsch: The Salt Chef, @thesaltchef

Matthew is the Executive Chef and co-owner of the celebrated restaurant Salt of the Earth located in Fennville, Michigan, & Principle Food & Drink in downtown Kalamazoo, MI, where he has been a foundational element in the farm-to-table movement in West Michigan since 2009. Matthew's food focus begins with sourcing the highest quality ingredients and to then process these ingredients as simply as possible, in an effort to honor the ingredients integrity, as well as the individuals that worked so tirelessly to produce it.

"Cooking in the moment" encompasses Matthew's philosophy of driving emotionality, seasonality, inspiration from ingredients, and the surrounding world to drive passionate experiences for both guests and staff members throughout his businesses.

A West Michigan native, Chef Matthew has been in the culinary and hospitality industry since 1997. As a college graduate of the culinary arts, Chef Matthew was inspired by an apprenticeship with the U.S. National Pastry Team in 2004 and worked throughout West Michigan for several years as Executive Pastry Chef. In late 2006, he relocated to Detroit, MI where he operated the famed Opus One Kitchen, and then took over operations as Corporate Executive Chef for Ford Advertising. Teaming up with Iron Chef Michael Symon to open Detroit's upscale steakhouse, Roast, this set the stage for Chef Matthew to relocate to Fennville in 2009. He then launched his first restaurant Salt of the Earth, and in 2015, introduced Principle Food & Drink to downtown Kalamazoo, MI.

“Sea Robins & Triggerfish:” The complete guide to preparing and serving overlooked seafood & by-catch; will be launched in July of 2017. Recipes, photography and instruction spoken through Matthew’s eyes in the Salt of the Earth kitchen and exploring over 30 species of incidental catch seafood.

Matthew commits his passion and energy to furthering the experiences of his guests through the provision of genuine and thoughtful hospitality while supporting the local community and movement of responsible sourcing, ingredient quality & environmental sustainability.